

Message Text

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14
ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: BOURASSA ON THE HUSTINGS

1. PREMIER BOURASSA HAS BEEN DIVIDING HIS TIME IN PAST FEW DAYS BETWEEN CAMPAIGNING IN HIS OWN MONTREAL CONSTITUENCY OF MERCIER AND VISITS TO OTHER POINTS IN PROVINCE IN SUPPORT OF BELEAGUERED LIBERAL CANDIDATES. THE FORMAT OF THESE RURAL VISITS IS BEGINNING TO FALL INTO SET SCENARIO. FIRST, PREMIER PRESENTS HIS REASONS FOR CALLING THE ELECTION EXPLAINING GOVERNMENTS' NEED FOR A CLEAR MANDATE TO NEGOTIATE ON QUEBEC'S BEHALF AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE WHERE THE FUTURE OF CANADA AND QUEBEC WILL BE AT STAKE. HE THEN EMPHASIZES STABILITY WHICH ONLY FEDERALISM OFFERS, IS NEEDED TO OBTAIN INVESTMENTS TO ASSURE EMPLOYMENT FOR QUEBECIS. BOURASSA THEN ASSERTS THAT P.Q. OFFERS ONLY "UNCERTAINTY"

AND "AMBIGUITY" AND REFERS TO OCTOBER 24TH DEBATE WITH RENE LEVENQUE IN WHICH P.Q. LEADER INVOKED THE POSSIBILITY OF A SECOND REFERENDUM AND A PROLONGED PERIOD OF UNSTABILITY. PREMIER ALSO REMINDS AUDIENCE THAT LEVESQUE WAS UNABLE IN SAME DEBATE TO SUPPORT HIS ACCUSATION OF CORRUPTION WITH A SOLE CONCRETE EXAMPLE. HE THEN MENTIONS THE FAILURE OF LE JOUR AS EVIDENCE OF P.Q. INCOMPETENCE BUT WITH LESS EMPHASIS THAN EARLIER IN CAMPAIGN. IN REFERRING TO THIRD PARTIES,

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HE DISMISSES THEM AS HAVING NEITHER PERSONNEL NOR PROGRAMS.

2. THE NEXT ELEMENT IN BOURASSA'S STANDARD STUMP PRESENTATION BEGINS WITH ASSERTION THAT OUTCOME OF ELECTION IS ASSURED. HE PRAISES THE QUALITY OF HIS LIBERAL TEAM, INCLUDES MARCHAND AND MACKASEY BY NAME, AND RECOGNIZES PRESENCE AND SPECIAL VALUE OF LOCAL CANDIDATE. HE SPEAKS BRIEFLY OF HIS ELECTORAL PROGRAM AND OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HIS GOVERNMENT UNDERLINGING PERFORMANCE OF QUEBEC ECONOMY WHICH HE CLAIMS HAS BEEN ABOVE THE CANADIAN AVERAGE FOR PAST SIX YEARS. CONTRARY TO USUAL POLITICAL PRACTICE ON SUCH OCCASIONS, BOURASSA RARELY MENTIONS LOCAL PROBLEMS RESTRICTING HIMSELF TO AN APPEAL FOR VOTER SUPPORT FOR THE LOCAL CANDIDATE. SEVERAL OBSERVERS WHO HAVE ATTENDED HIS RURAL MEETINGS REPORT HE WAS RECEIVED WITH INTEREST BUT LITTLE ENTHUSIASM. IN MEETINGS IN DEPRESSED "EASTERN TOWNSHIPS", PREMIER'S RATHER WOODEN PERFORMANCES REPORTEDLY WERE SUBJECT TO MINOR HECKLING AND BOOING FROM AUDIENCE.

4. COMMENT: BOURASSA IS NOT EFFECTIVE AS STUMP SPEAKER. HE LACKS THE PRESENCE AND FIRE NEEDED TO EXCITE CROWD ENTHUSIASM. HIS FORTE IS DEVISING AND EXECUTING INTRICATE POLITICAL MANUEVEURS. HIS PUBLIC APPEARANCES, TO BE EFFECTIVE, MUST BE CAREFULLY CONTRIVED AND MANAGED. THE LEVENQUE-BOURASSA DEBATE WAS EXAMPLE OF SOMETHING HE DOES WELL.
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